

Customer Spotlight

Schneider Electric Digitizes Product Catalog to Improve Customers' Experience

For over 80 years, the Schneider Electric North America product catalog, the Digest, has been viewed as Best in Class by customers. The 1,000-page Digest was developed as a print-first document: in 2012, 175,000 copies of the Digest were printed and distributed at a significant cost to Schneider. High publication costs along with a labor intensive effort to update information caused many delays in delivering up-to-date information to customers. While surveys indicated an 87% rating that the printed Digest was either excellent or very good, only 68% rated the online PDF at the same level. The online PDF version of the Digest was too slow to download and use, did not provide an effective search capability, and was not compatible with mobile devices.

"This is just the beginning for us. We envision doing many more things with digital to help our customers with Schneider Electric buying decisions and product information."
 says Kevin Habel,
 Global Product Manager for the MOTIF environment at Schneider Electric



The Schneider Electric Digest has been available since 1933.

Moving to DITA XML Authoring Promotes Efficiency

A few years earlier, Habel had achieved significant savings by migrating Schneider Electric's technical documentation to the MOTIF environment. MOTIF's foundation is based on the Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA), an open-source, extensible markup language (XML) that defines rules for encoding content so it is easy to reuse in multiple documents and output formats. MOTIF encompasses several PTC authoring and content management tools including Arbor-text Editor, Arbortext IsoDraw, Creo Illustrate, and Windchill. In combination with specific workflow processes, MOTIF makes it easier for authors to structure, develop, manage, and publish content.



The Solution

"Everyone wanted a more reliable approach. Mark Mitchell and I agreed that DITA was a proven foundation we could build on. We were confident the right pieces were in place and the new Digest would be a hit with customers."
says Kevin Habel

Teaming up with Content Delivery Specialists Speeds Implementation

Habel and Mitchell contacted Oberon Technologies to assist with the Digest project. Oberon had an established track record of working with organizations to optimize structured content for multiple channels, including mobile.

Consultants from Oberon Technologies recommended using Titania Delivery in combination with PTC's solutions for content creation to further simplify the digital publishing process in the DITA environment. Titania Delivery is a cloud-based portal solution that allows users to publish documents in multiple print and digital formats. The portal enables Schneider Electric customers to search and locate product information using any Internet-connected computing device. It also captures consumer feedback for ongoing improvements to the Digest.

"The idea of digitizing the Digest seemed overwhelming at the start. It was great when we were able to have all our DITA content transformed and available online for customers in just five weeks."

says Mark Mitchell

Because of the complexity of the tables, graphics, and technical content that made up the Digest, Habel and Mitchell were expecting the digitalization process to take several months to complete. But with Oberon Technologies' expertise, the team was able to put the Digest online in responsive HTML5 layout in just 35 days.

"We can now add content and fix errors in a timely manner. Responsive content on mobile has allowed us to leapfrog competitors."
says Kevin Habel

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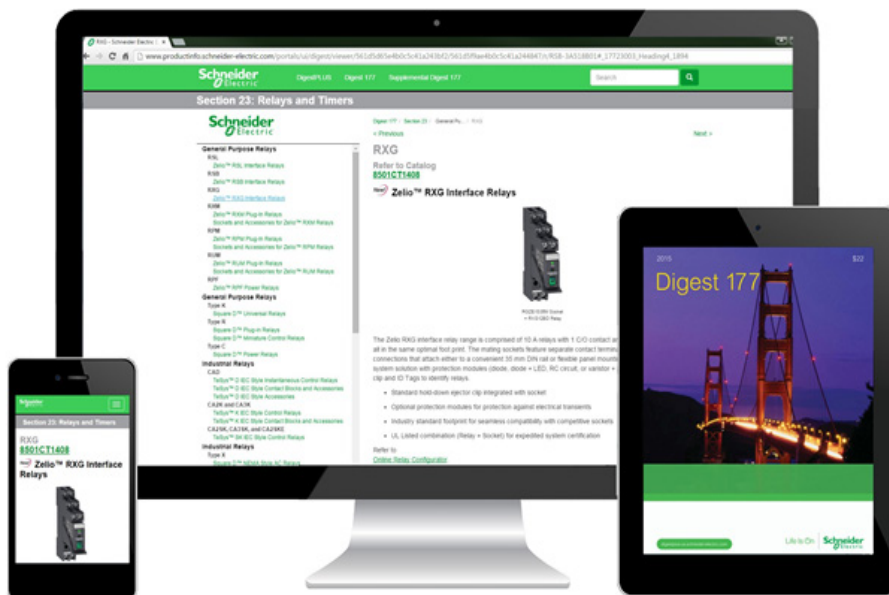
Turning the Digest into a Living Document

Schneider Electric typically reprints the hardcopy version of the Digest every three years. The Digest was simply too large, complex, and expensive to consider more frequent updates. In its digital format, however, as-needed digital updates became practical, affordable, and timely.

With all Digest content available in responsive HTML5, Schneider has achieved the final step towards a full "end-to-end" mobile solution for delivering this popular catalog. Writers have improved their development and publishing processes and source content has been migrated from page-oriented file formats to an open source topic-based format. With pre-built publishing templates, content authors are able to quickly update individual topics while having less concern about formatting. Publishing Digest updates to PDF is significantly more automated than before and publishing to HTML5 is nearing a fully automated process.

The company now releases digital Digest updates once each quarter. The digital format is becoming increasingly popular with customers who use its built-in search features to filter searches and quickly locate needed products.

The project was so successful, Schneider Electric presented the Digest team with a top global award during 2015. Other Schneider groups have asked Habel to assist them with bringing the same efficiencies to their publication efforts.



Take a look at the digital Digest at <http://bit.ly/SEDigest>



About Oberon Technologies

Oberon Technologies partners with our customers and leading software suppliers to provide innovative solutions for creating, sharing, and delivering information. Our extensive experience and expertise designing, developing and deploying these solutions has helped hundreds of companies reduce costs, increase revenue and improve quality. We are known for our integrity, accountability and commitment in every engagement.

OBERON Technologies

PO Box 428
Saline, Michigan 48176
+1 (734) 666-0400
info@oberontech.com
www.oberontech.com